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Enhancing Cultural Competence in LGBTQ+ Care for Providers, Staff, and Patients

The request: This proposal seeks support for an education program aimed at improving cultural competence among healthcare providers and staff at Valley Medical Group (VMG). The project addresses the critical issue of insufficient preparedness and knowledge in providing culturally competent care for LGBTQ+ patients, which contributes to significant health disparities.

This educational program involves a quality improvement initiative using simulation-based education to enhance LGBTQ+ cultural competence among VMG providers and staff. The program will include online learning modules, in-person simulations, and exposure to LGBTQ+ community members. Participants will complete a validated tool before and after the intervention to assess improvements in preparedness, attitudinal awareness, and knowledge. The project will be implemented at VMG with the involvement of clinical educators, quality and clinical operations staff, LGBTQ+ Champions, and leadership. The educational curriculum will be developed and delivered with support from the marketing and communications team and talent development experts. Patient experience scores and feedback will be collected to measure the impact of the intervention. The intervention will expand throughout Valley Health System following the pilot.

The expected outcomes include improved scores, enhanced patient satisfaction, and better health outcomes for LGBTQ+ patients. The project aims to standardize LGBTQ+ care practices and foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement among VMG staff.

Funding would support the following needs:

- Development of Educational Curriculum
- Simulation Equipment and Materials
- Staff Training and Development
- Participant Stipends and Incentives
- Data Collection and Analysis
- Administrative Costs

Background: LGBTQ+ individuals face substantial healthcare disparities due to the inadequate cultural competence of healthcare providers and staff. This includes discrimination, privacy breaches, and insufficient awareness of LGBTQ+ health needs. Despite LGBTQ+ individuals constituting 7.1% of the U.S. adult population and over 20% of Generation Z, healthcare providers often lack the training required to address their specific needs. This leads to lower rates of necessary health screenings and higher rates of mental health issues, substance use, and suicide among LGBTQ+ individuals.

Currently, VMG's approach to LGBTQ+ cultural competence is limited to basic web-based training. This training lacks opportunities for practical application, feedback, and exposure to LGBTQ+ individuals, leading to inconsistent care quality. Providers and staff report varying levels of

comfort and competence, and there is no standardized approach to LGBTQ+ physical examinations or health screenings. The lack of cultural competence impacts individuals, the LGBTQ+ population, and the healthcare system. LGBTQ+ patients at VMG's 92 locations in New Jersey and New York are directly affected, as are the broader community and healthcare providers who lack the necessary training. Institutions like VMG, The Valley Hospital, and local schools and universities also experience the effects of these deficiencies.